



Care for the Wild International

The Granary Tickfold Farm Kingsfold West Sussex RH12 3SE United Kingdom
Tel: 01306 627900 Fax: 01306 627901 E-mail: info@careforthewild.com Web: www.careforthewild.com

Elin Jones AM
Minister for Rural Affairs
Welsh Assembly Government
Cathays Park
Cardiff
CF10 3NQ

5/1/2010

Dear Ms Jones,

Proposals to commence badger culling in Pembrokeshire

My name is Mark Jones, I'm a veterinary surgeon, and I work as Director of Programmes at Care for the Wild International, a wildlife conservation charity based in West Sussex.

We are extremely disturbed to see that you have accepted recommendations from your Chief Veterinary Officer to establish an Intensive Action Pilot Area in Pembrokeshire for the eradication of bovine tuberculosis (TB), which includes an option for the extensive and indiscriminate culling of badgers.

This decision appears to be in direct conflict with the announcement by your counterpart at Westminster Hilary Benn in July 2008, that the Government's policy "will be **not** to issue any licences to farmers to cull badgers for TB control". This followed consideration of the large amount of scientific evidence available, including the 2007 report following the 10 year "Randomised Badger Culling Trial" commissioned by DEFRA in 1997. This trial represents one of the largest epidemiological scientific studies ever undertaken, and in the introduction it clearly states that "...badger culling can make no meaningful contribution to cattle TB control in Britain". The report identifies weaknesses in cattle TB testing, and the movement of cattle as being the major factor in the spread of TB.

Sadly, TB control is a devolved issue, and in contrast to your English counterparts the Welsh Assembly appears to have chosen to ignore the scientific advice. The consideration of further "trials" which include badger culling as a method of TB control in cattle seems incredulous in the face of the above evidence. I can only imagine that these decisions are motivated by politics rather than science.

On behalf of Care for the Wild International, and our supporters in Pembrokeshire and beyond who have written to us to express their concern about this issue, I urge you to reconsider any proposals to resume indiscriminate badger culling in your efforts to control the spread of TB in cattle. Such actions will not only damage fragile wildlife populations and ecosystems, but are extremely unlikely to achieve the elimination of TB in cattle, and may even make the situation worse.

I look forward to your response.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Jones', enclosed within a large, loopy oval shape.

Mark Jones

Programmes and Fundraising Director

Care for the Wild International, UK

Tel: 01306 627900 Mob: 07947749475 Email: mark@careforthewild.com